(c) if so, whether it is a fact that the weak load feeler rail lines are unable to bear the forceful speed of the rail engines today and as a result thereof accidents are increasing; and

(d) if so, the steps being taken by Government to improve to rail line capacity?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) No, Sir. Track renewal and upgradation is a continuous activity. Over the years, track structure has been upgraded with rails of larger cross section, higher ultimate tensile strength, layout on pre-stressed concrete sleepers as opposed to wooden sleepers etc., powerful locomotives are certified to run only if the track structure is adequate for the purpose.

Suggestions of committees on rail accidents

425. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that suggestions of the committees set up after the rail accidents are not being followed by Government;

(b) if so, whether it is also fact that as a result thereof the rail accidents are increasing in the country rapidly;

(c) if so, the steps being taken by Government for the protection of the rail passengers in the country; and

(d) if delayed, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise, as the number of consequential train accidents during the year 2001-2002 were 415 which came down to 351 in 2002-2003 and 325 during 2003-2004. This further came down to 234* during 2004-2005 which is the lowest ever figure in a year, reflecting an improvement of 28% over the corresponding period of the last year.

In the current financial year 2005-2006, there have been 141* consequential train accidents during April to October 2005, as compared to 133* during the corresponding period of last year.

(c) and (d) Safety is the prime concern on Indian Railways and all possible steps are undertaken to prevent accidents. These measures include adoption of suitable and modern technologies for interlocking and signaling system, upgradation of standards of track and rolling stock, modernization of maintenance practices, replacement of overaged assets, upgradation of training aids like simulators, checks on observance of safety precautions and provision of Anti Collision Device.

*Figures are provisional.

Gauge conversion of Jaipur-Ringas-Sikar-Loharu Rail Line

426. SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal of gauge conversion on rail route Jaipur-Ringas-Sikar-Loharu in North West Zone is under consideration;

(b) whether the said work is proposed to be covered under BOT; and

(c) if so, by when and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Updating survery for gauge conversion of Loharu-Sikar-Churu-Ringus-Jaipur has been taken up.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. The decision will be based on results of the survey.

Gauge conversion projects

427. SHRI THANGA TAMIL SELVAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the total financial allocation for the gauge conversion projects for the past three years, State-wise;

(b) the total number of kilometers converted from metre-gauge to broad-gauge during the past three years, State-wise;